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Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01 /022 W
---------- 079628
R 250715Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0171

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 8869

H PASS CONGRESSMAN SCHEUER

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP, CG
SUBJECT: CODEL SCHEUER

REF: KINSHASA 8863

1. PER REFTEL, FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF FIFTH OF NINE DRAFT MEMCONS OF SESSIONS ON POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS TO WHICH AN EMBASSY REPORTING OFFICER ACCOMPANIED THE CODEL.

2. PARTICIPANTS: CONGRESSMAN JAMES H. SCHEUER; MRS. POLLY GREENBURG; MS. HELEN COHEN; DR. JOHN E. KENNEDY, AID PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER; MR. ROB ROBERTSON, AID POPULATION OFFICER.

PLACE: USAID/KINSHASA OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

TIME: 1430, OCTOBER 8, 1976.

AT CODEL'S REQUEST, DR. KENNEDY BEGAN THE MEETING WITH A DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT EFFORT TO IDENTIFY AND CONTROL AN OUTBREAK OF FEVER WHICH HAS CAUSED A NUMBER OF FATALITIES IN NORTHERN ZAIRE. HE THEN OUTLINED THE ZAIRE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES AND PROJECTED USAID ASSISTANCE, ENDING WITH COMMENTS RELATIVE TO THE INTEGRATION OF FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES INTO THE HEALTH SYSTEM.

CONGRESSMAN SCHEUER STATED HIS BELIEF THAT, UNLESS POPULATION GROWTH IS CONTROLLED, THERE IS NO WAY THE HEALTH CARE PROGRAM IS EVER GOING TO CATCH UP WITH NEEDS--THAT ALL THESE AFRICAN COUNTRIES
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ARE HEADING FOR DISASTER WITH THEIR PRESENT POPULATION GROWTH

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RATES. WITH THE POPULATION DOUBLING EVERY TWENTY TO THIRTY YEARS, NOT ONLY HEALTH CARE, BUT EDUCATION, FOOD SUPPLIES, ALL SERVICES, WILL BECOME UNACCEPTABLY INADEQUATE. SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE NOW. WHAT ACTION IS BEING TAKEN HERE?

MR. ROBERTSON REPLIED THAT FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES ARE JUST BEGINNING IN ZAIRE. THE GOVERNMENT POLICY SUPPORTING THE INTRODUCTION OF FAMILY PLANNING INFORMATION AND SERVICES WAS ONLY ESTABLISHED IN 1973 AND THE FIRST FAMILY PLANNING CONSULTATION IN A GOVERNMENT CLINIC TOOK PLACE IN THAT YEAR. EARLY USAID ASSISTANCE FOR THE GOVERNMENT MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH SERVICES, AGREED UPON IN 1972, WAS CONCEIVED WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING A VEHICLE FOR FAMILY PLANNING AS A CATALYST FOR THE INITIAL STEPS BY THE GOVERNMENT IN SUPPORT OF FAMILY PLANNING. THE GOVERNMENT HEALTH PROGRAM HAS SINCE ESTABLISHED THE THREE FAMILY PLANNING CENTERS THE CONGRESSMAN HAS SEEN AND A TRAINING CADRE OF NINE NURSES IS READY FOR EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM. A VERY CAPABLE ZAIRIAN PHYSICIAN, DOCTOR SABWA, WAS NAMED TO HEAD THE NATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM IN NOVEMBER 1975.

CONCERNING FURTHER EXPANSION OF FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES, ROBERTSON SAID THAT TWO LEVELS OF ACTION ARE EMERGING. ONE IS WITHIN THE HEALTH MINISTRY'S PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPLETE HEALTH SERVICES IN EACH OF THE SEVERAL HUNDRED HEALTH ZONES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. AN AID PROJECT WILL ASSIST IN BUILDING AN INTEGRATED PREVENTIVE/CURATIVE HEALTH SYSTEM IN A FEW OF THESE ZONES BEGINNING NEXT YEAR. FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES WILL BE INCLUDED. THESE PARTICULAR ZONES WILL BE MODELS FOR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. HOWEVER, INSOFAR AS NATIONAL AVAILABILITY OF FAMILY PLANNING IS CONCERNED, THIS PROGRAM COULD TAKE TEN TO TWENTY YEARS. THEREFORE, A SECOND LEVEL OF ACTION CALLS FOR INTRODUCTION OF FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES INTO EXISTING HEALTH FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THIS IS BEING DONE THROUGH INVITIATION TO EXISTING INSTITUTIONS--PRIMARILY CHURCH SUPPORTED MEDICAL FACILITIES--TO SEND STAFF NURSES TO KINSHASA FOR TRAINING IN FAMILY PLANNING. THESE NURSES THEN INTRODUCE FAMILY PLANNING AS A SERVICE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE INSTITUTIONS. ABOUT 45 NURSES HAVE ALREADY BEEN TRAINED IN TWO SIX WEEK SESSIONS SINCE THIS PROGRAM BEGAN IN LATE JULY OF THIS YEAR.

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0172

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H PASS CONGRESSMAN SCHEUER

CONGRESSMAN SCHEUER ASKED IF THERE WEREN'T SOME WAY WE COULD SPEED UP THIS PROCESS--SUCH AS A ONE YEAR CRASH PROGRAM TO TRAIN A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF NURSES IN FAMILY PLANNING TECHNIQUES TO SATURATE THE COUNTRY. MRS. GREENBERG SUGGESTED AN OFFER TO BRING IN SEVERAL HUNDRED U.S. NURSES, EACH TO WORK WITH A ZAIRIAN COUNTERPART UNTIL THE ZAIRIAN IS PREPARED TO TAKE OVER, THEN MOVE TO A SECOND COUNTERPART, AND SO ON.

ROBERTSON SAID HE BELIEVED SUCH AN OFFER, EVEN IF FINANCIALLY FEASIBLE, WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE. THE COUNTRY REALLY DOESN'T SEE ITSELF AS HAVING A POPULATION PROBLEM, WITH IMMENSE AREAS COMPLETELY UNPOPULATED AND AN AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY OF ONLY EIGHT PERSONS PER SQUARE KILOMETER. SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ADVOCATE AN INCREASING POPULATION AS THE ANSWER TO MANY OF THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. INDIVIDUAL LEADERS PRIVATELY RECOGNIZE THE POPULATION GROWTH RATE PROBLEM, BUT POLITICALLY THEY ARE UNWILLING TO RISK A PUBLIC STAND THAT SMACKS OF POPULATION CONTROL. FAMILY PLANNING INTRODUCED AT A REASONABLE PACE FOR THE HEALTH OF MOTHER AND CHILD--EVEN FOR THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE FAMILY--IS FINE, BUT A SUDDEN MAJOR INFLUX OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD BE OFFENSIVELY OUT OF PROPORTION TO OTHER NEEDS OF MUCH GREATER PRIORITY IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE.

MRS. GREENBERG THEN SUGGESTED WE BRING IN THE NURSE/TRAINERS AS A PACKAGE DEAL, OFFERING NOT JUST FAMILY PLANNING BUT GENERAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES--IMMUNIZATION CAPABILITY WITH PORTABLE REGRIGERATION, MEDICAL SUPPLY KITS, ETC. SINCE FAMILY PLANNING IS ENCOURAGED FOR SPACING OF CHILDREN FOR HEALTH, IT COULD CERTAINLY BE A PART OF SUCH A GENERAL HEALTH PROGRAM.

DR. KENNEDY REPLIED THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A VERY COMPLEX
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SITUATION. EVEN FOR GENERAL HEALTH PURPOSES, THE LARGE NUMBER OF FOREIGN TECHNICIANS PROPOSED WOULD STILL BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT. THE COUNTRY HAS ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THE STAGE OF HAVING FOREIGNERS DO IT ALL FOR THEM AND NOW WANTS TO LEAVE THAT APPROACH TO THE PAST. UNOBTRUSIVE TECHNICAL AID IS DESIRED BUT NOT SUCH AN OBVIOUS FOREIGN PRESENCE. ON A PRACTICAL BASIS, THIS VOLUME OF IMMEDIATE AID WOULD BE BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM TO ABSORB, LEAVING ASIDE THE QUESTION OF FINANCING, WHICH WOULD BE PROHIBITIVE.

CONGRESSMAN SCHEUER AGAIN STATED HIS BELIEF THAT WE ARE SITTING ON A TIME BOMB AND THAT ACTION MUST BE TAKEN.

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ROBERTSON AGREED THAT THE PROBLEM IS MORE IMMEDIATE THAN THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO ADMIT BUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS BEGINNING TO ACT--MORE SLOWLY THAN WE WOULD WISH, BUT AT LEAST THE ACTION IS NOW ON ZAIRE'S OWN INITIATIVE. THE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE FAMILY PLANNING TRAINING TO NURSES FROM EXISTING HEALTH INSTITUTIONS SCATTERED AROUND THE COUNTRY--PRIMARILY NON-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS--IS A VERY POSITIVE MOVE WITHIN THE ZAIRIAN FRAME OF REFERENCE AND IS AN ACTION WHICH SHOULD MAKE CONTRACEPTIVE INFORMATION AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO AROUND 50 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

CONGRESSMAN SCHEUER INDICATED THAT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH BUT THAT IT IS, AT LEAST, SOMETHING.

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